

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A branching device for at least one electric line, the branching device comprising:

a housing; [[and]]

at least one electrically conducting wire terminal that provides a branching contact, is accommodated in a holder, and includes contact lips with cutting edges for cutting through insulation of a wire to be connected to the wire terminal; wherein:

the at least one wire terminal further includes at least one connecting lug which protrudes above the holder [[,]] and a through-channel for the uninterrupted passage of the wire, ~~and at least one holding-down clamp which holds the wires in the through-channel of the wire terminals;~~

at least one of the contact lips is located diagonally to the through-channel so that the tip of the edge of the contact lip protrudes into the through-channel;

at least one of the contact lips is flexible in a direction pointing away from the through-channel; and

at least one holding-down clamp holds the wires in the through-channel of the wire terminals and ~~the holding-down clamp~~ exhibits a transverse plate that closes off the through-channel and has an opening through which the connecting lug of the wire terminal protrudes.

2-24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the wire terminal exhibits a generally octagonal outline with two opposing longer sides, two shorter sides orthogonal to the longer sides, and diagonal sides situated between the longer and shorter sides,

and wherein the at least one holder includes a corresponding octagonal locating space for accommodating the wire terminal.

26. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the contact lips are generally aligned with the diagonal sides of the wire terminal.

27. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the through-channel runs in a straight line through the wire terminal.

28. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the wire terminal is accommodated releasably in the holder.

29. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the device includes a number of wire terminals corresponding to at least a number of wires to be branched.

30. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the contact lips are provided in pairs in each case on a wire terminal.

31. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 30, wherein the spacing between two paired contact lips is less than or equal to the diameter of a wire to be connected to the wire terminal.

32. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 30, wherein the edges of paired contact lips facing the through-channel run parallel to one another at least in sections.

33. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 30, wherein two paired contact lips together form an entry section for the wire, with a spacing between the contact lips widening towards an entry side of the through-channel.

34. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein a notch is provided between the wire terminal and its holder.

35. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holder of the wire terminals is attached releasably to the housing.

36. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, further comprising multiple wire terminals and a common holder for all of the wire terminals.

37. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, further comprising at least one common holding-down clamp for all wires.

38. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holding-down clamp represents a closure of the openings formed between the contact lips.

39. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holding-down clamp can be latched to the holder of the wire terminal.

40. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holding-down clamp can be latched to the housing.

41. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein seals are provided on the housing at the outlets for the line.

42. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 41, wherein the seals are formed as sealing rings with a side cut for inserting the line.

43. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the housing is assembled from a housing base section and a housing upper section.

44. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 43, wherein the housing base section and the housing upper section can be screwed together.

45. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein strain relief is provided on the housing at the outlets for the lines.